

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4, 5, 9-13, 22, and 23 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 2, 4, 5, and 22 are amended for the Examiner's consideration. Claims 3, 6, 7, and 21 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The above amendments do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the original disclosure. For example, support for the amendments is provided at Figures 2-3, in the claims as originally filed, and at paragraphs [0022] – [0027] of the published application (i.e., US 2006/0040504). Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 7 contains allowable subject matter. By this response, claim 2 is amended to incorporate the features of claims 3 and 7. Claims 3 and 7 are canceled. Therefore, claim 2 should be allowed, as should claims 4, 5, 9-13, 22, and 23 which depend from claim 2.

Amendments to the Claims

Applicants have amended claims 2, 4, 5, and 22 and cancelled claims 3, 6, 7, and 21 from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 2-6, 9-13, and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon (US 6,291,360) in view of Kudo (JP 63216346). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

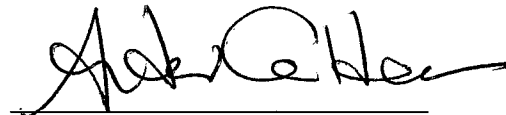
While Applicants do not agree that the applied art renders obvious the claimed invention, by this amendment, claims 2, 4, 5, and 22 are amended and claims 3, 6, 7, and 21 are canceled. More specifically, claim 2 is amended to include the features of previously indicated allowable claim 7 and intermediate claim 3. Therefore, claim 2 should be allowed. Moreover, as claims 4, 5, 9-13, 22, and 23 depend from now allowable claim 2, these claims, too, should be allowed. As such, the §103 rejection of claims 2-6, 9-13, and 21-23 is moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 2-6, 9-13, and 21-23 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', written over a horizontal line.

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